

I believe that Sinclair Broadcasting's forcing their stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" shows the dangers of media consolidation and the urgent need for a more rigorous approach to media regulation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Here, Sinclair has betrayed this trust by airing an obviously partisan program with no hint of balance or fairness in presenting opposing views. Moreover, it has taken advantage of the powers granted to it by consolidation to force this extremist policy on local media outlets, stripping these outlets of the autonomy they need to function within their communities. The result is a media completely supine and subservient to the economic or political interests of a tiny group of people, regardless of how unrepresentative, quixotic, or just plain wrongheaded these interests may be. The needs of the public have no influence upon such a system, and it is the duty of the FCC to redress such a state of affairs.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. It also shows why ideals like the now-discontinued "fairness doctrine" need to return as guiding principles of media regulation.

Thank you for your attention.